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Inside: Your Guide to the NSBA Convention

EDUCATION WEEK

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Bias Is Charged In Awarding of Bilingual Grants

Transitional Programs Shunned, Critics Say

By Julie A. Miller

WASHINGTON—The Education Department plans to give bilingual-education grants to "special alternative" programs that scored lower in expert reviews than transitional bilingual programs that are not to be funded, a department source said last week.

The action apparently contradicts the public posture of the department that it does not favor one instructional approach over another in the $110-million grant program.

"There is an agreement between the Congress and the department that they would fund applications based on quality, and that's not what's happening here," the source said.

In addition, the department official said that a new, additional bilingual-education competition announced last week was a

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Iowa, Arkansas Enact 'Choice'; Proposals Gain in Other States

By William Snider

Iowa lawmakers have narrowly approved a bill that puts that state at the leading edge of 1989's hottest education-reform wave: school choice.

And late last week the Arkansas legislature approved a similar open-enrollment measure.

With the signatures of both governors virtually assured, Arkansas and Iowa follow the lead of Minnesota, which last year decided to allow all parents a free choice to enroll their children in virtually any public-school district in the state.

And before any students actually enter a new school under one of these programs, several more states are also likely to have adopted similar plans, undertaking what some consider the most significant structural reform to sweep American education in decades.

Lawmakers in 15 states are currently either considering open-enrollment legislation or awaiting recommendations from official boards or task forces charged with developing public-school-choice proposals.

At least six other states are considering less comprehensive choice proposals that in most cases would restrict choices to specific groups of students, including the at-risk or high-school upperclassmen.

Several lawmakers who are sponsoring choice legislation said that their efforts received a major boost when President Bush wholeheartedly endorsed the idea in Janu-

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AP/Wide World

Art Ollie, key backer of choice, in Iowa House debate. Minnesota, meanwhile, is implementing its plan. Story on page 18.

Voc. Ed. Funds For Needy Said Going Elsewhere

Official Urges Panel To Review Formulas

By Reagan Walker

WASHINGTON—Poorer communities in many states may not be receiving their fair share of federal vocational-education funds, an official of the General Accounting Office told lawmakers last week.

The comments came in testimony at the opening Congressional hearing on the reauthorization of the act governing such expenditures, which total $918 million this year.

"2 + 2": A promising new vocational plan. Page 25.

William J. Gainer, the G.A.O.'s director for education and employment issues, said a review of practices in six states had shown that, in some economically depressed areas, per-pupil spending in vocational programs was lower than that found in wealthier communities—even though the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act specifically mandates that funds be directed to the poorer communities.

Mr. Gainer told the House Elementary, Secondary, and Vocational Education Subcommittee that several factors in the application of the law all tended to direct funding away from low-income communities.

These include, he said, the criteria used in some states to determine economically depressed areas, the funding formula for the disadvantaged student set-aside, and the reallocation of funds from districts that cannot meet the matching requirement.

The G.A.O., which is the investigative arm of the Congress, looked at 20 local programs in the six states it examined to determine how the Perkins funds were being spent. The states reviewed were Arkansas, California, Kansas, Maryland, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania.

Under the Perkins Act, more than half of

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Texas Restrictions On Teacher Training Cited in Complaint

By Lynn Olson

Teacher-education programs in Texas may no longer meet national accreditation standards because of constraints placed on them by the state's legislature and regulatory agencies, a prominent teacher educator has charged.

Hendrik D. Gideonse, professor of education and policy science at the University of Cincinnati, filed the complaint against 26 Texas institutions late last month with the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education. NCATE certifies education schools, colleges, and departments of education nationwide.

The complaint charges that a Texas law, which bars teacher-training programs from requiring students to take more than 18 undergraduate credit hours in education in order to be certified, prevents them from exercising "self governance" and thus makes them ineligible for accreditation.

Texas's attempt to "cap" the amount of professional coursework required of prospective teachers has cast a shadow over teacher educators nationally, who are worried about whether similar tactics will be tried elsewhere.

Although several other states, including California, New Jersey, and Virginia, have placed some limitations on the content of teachers' professional training, none are as severe as the Texas mandates.

Mr. Gideonse said his unprecedented ac-

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Channel One Debut Wins Viewer Plaudits, But School Groups Pan 'Commercialism'

By Mark Walsh

BILLERICA, MASS.—Channel One, the controversial new television program for teenagers, came to Billerica Memorial High School in this Boston suburb last week, brought to students by Snickers candy bars, Head and Shoulders shampoo, and Levi's jeans, among other advertisers.

And the viewers here liked it.

The school is one of six sites for a seven-week pilot test of the classroom news show, developed by Whittle Communications, a Knoxville, Tenn.-based specialist in innovative "targeted" media.

In the première, which was beamed from Los Angeles to a satellite dish at each test site, students saw a slick, fast-paced program that included reports on the Eastern Airlines strike, death threats against the author Salman Rushdie, and concerns of teenagers in the Soviet Union.

The program also reported on itself, highlighting in one segment the controversy Channel One has touched off in educational circles and elsewhere.

Because of the escalating debate over its ethical and educational merits, the commercial venture's launching was news not

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Reform at 5: The Unfinished Agenda

'Joining Forces'

The sobering realization that many students have needs too great for schools alone to meet has led educators to what may be a historic juncture. More and more, they are seeking ways to bridge the bureaucratic systems that traditionally have dispensed what one author calls "isolated slivers of help."

An alliance between education and the social services could be, many suggest, "the brass ring" that provides a continuous, coherent path to better lives for the most troubled young.

A special 10-page report by Staff Writer Deborah L. Cohen begins on page 7.

Jeffrey High

Also in the news

4 **Moving Off 'Dead Center'**
In Memphis, a bold reform plan would create a "deregulated" district from eight of the system's most problem-ridden schools.

5 **'Viewpoint Discrimination'**
The Justice Department now says peace activists should be able to join military recruiters at high-school "career days."

17 **Testing Kindergartners**
Under pressure from educators, Georgia decides to drop its use of pencil-and-paper tests to assess 1st-grade readiness.

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